

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

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Courage.



ST. JOHN AND THE LAMB—MURILLO.

THIS is a picture made by the Spanish artist Murillo, to be placed over an altar in a church. In it the painter gives us his ideal of John the Baptist as a little child.

The reed cross in his left hand and the lamb at his side are two objects which the artists usually put with their pictures of John the Baptist either as child or man. Both refer to John's mission as one who baptized and preached just before Jesus

did, making people ready to hear him. Many people could not read in the days when these pictures hung in the churches, but they could pick out the figure with the slender cross and the lamb, and say, "The artist meant this one to represent John the Baptist."

The boy wears a skin robe and stands in a wild place because the Bible said the man John was clothed in a camel's hair garment and lived in the wilderness.

BY E. H. SLOCUM.

IN this work-a-day world of ours,
No matter wherever we go,
Up and down our own land, or in others,
Let us turn our face to the foe.

Is it fear that another's laughter
Will burden our way along life?
Take our stand for the right, face it boldly;
'Twill lessen the fight against strife.

The jeers and the cries of our comrades
Will rankle at times, we all know;
But onward we'll march, ever onward,
If we keep our face to the foe.

Let any temptation assail us,
On which God can no favor bestow;
We'll win, at the end, when He listens,
"Lord, we kept our face to the foe."

Bridge-builder from Necessity.

BY BETH PORTER SHERWOOD.

THERE, I think that looks pretty good." With considerable pardonable pride Harley Gross stood back and surveyed the work he had just completed,—the repairing and whitening of the fence and gate between the highway and the picturesque old farm-house which was his home.

"Say, don't you think that's an improvement, father?" he asked, as a frail-looking man opened the gate and came into the yard.

"It certainly is," approved Mr. Gross, heartily, looking appreciatively at Harley's work.

"The whitening will be all off by next spring probably, and then we'll have it painted," suggested Harley, hopefully.

"I'm afraid we won't." Mr. Gross shook his head dejectedly.

"Why?" asked Harley, taking quick alarm. "Did you—has Mr. Frost?"—he stammered.

"Yes: I've been to see Mr. Frost, and he won't renew the mortgage. He says he's waited so long, and we haven't got it paid off yet, that he does not see any use in waiting any longer."

"Why, that's unreasonable," broke out Harley, impatiently. "You've been sick so long, I don't know what else he could expect. Now that you're able to work again, we'll get along all right."

Mr. Gross shook his head slowly. "I don't think he wants us to pay him. He let slip that his brother from the city wants it for a summer home, and then he mentioned the improvements he intends making. He wants to put a veranda all around, and paint the house, and have a circular, gravelled drive and flower beds in front and— Oh, I don't know what all." His thin face broke in a humorous smile.

Harley wheeled and looked at the house speculatively. "It would look well that way," he said slowly. "We'll do that ourselves by and by."

"Not if Mr. Frost won't renew the mortgage. He can foreclose any time, you know," said Mr. Frost, gravely, as he started to go to the house.

"Say, hello there."

Mr. Gross and Harley turned, to see a man, leaning from a passing wagon.

"Say," he repeated, "I just saw Don Merritt, and he told me your back pasture gate had been left open, and your young cattle have got out and are in danger of getting into Frost's back meadow. They'd do a lot of mischief if they got in there."

"They surely would," affirmed Mr. Gross. "Harley, you'd better go right out and look them up."

The neighbor drove on, and Harley, after putting away his tools, walked out the long, grass-grown wagon-road that led to the rear of the farm, keeping, meanwhile, a sharp lookout for the truant cattle, which he found after a little at the foot of the meadow, enjoying the succulent, second crop of red clover, which they were quite unwilling to leave.

He gathered them up, put them back in their pasture; and, lured by the sunny splendor of the early autumn day, he strolled the low fields, pausing occasionally to gather a handful of wild hazel-nuts from shrubs growing here and there in out-of-the-way fence corners or to pluck a cluster of leaves already brilliant with their autumn coloring. And by and by he found himself in the vicinity of a big butternut tree away down by the creek; and, as he had nothing in which to carry a quantity of the nuts, he contented himself with gathering a pocketful, making up his mind to visit the tree in the near future before some one else had appropriated all of its creamy spoils.

"Why, I had no idea it was so late," he thought, viewing with dismay the descending sun as he scrambled down out of the tree. "I'll have to hustle home as fast as possible, and the nearest way from here will be across Mr. Frost's field by the edge of the swamp."

Accordingly he ascended a ridge, and then went down a long slope, coming to a small bog, along the margin of which he picked his way, careful not to venture too far from solid ground, lest the deceptive crust, covered here and there by a growth of coarse grass and weeds and an occasional clump of small shrubs, should give way and let him into its treacherous depths.

To a casual observer much of the surface appeared firm enough, but Harley knew by experience how misleading that appearance was, as more than once, when the season was especially dry, he had made tentative ventures after some alluring plant or flower, only to be obliged to scramble back to solid ground, resolved, for the time, never to repeat the experiment.

As he gained the farther side, he paused and looked back at the tangle of brilliant-leaved shrubs, backed by a grove of pale green tamaracks, beyond which was a hillside covered by a growth of dark firs.

As he stood gazing idly, a hoarse, feeble cry, like that of some young animal, reached his ears, and he glanced hastily around to see whence it had come, at the same time recalling the fate of a luckless calf that, some years before, had ventured, or been forced by its stronger mates, beyond its depth, and had been engulfed in the relentless depths before him.

As Harley stood looking, the cry was repeated, and a cold shiver ran over him as he seemed to recognize something human in the sound.

"Hello, hello," he shouted, then paused to listen; and now he could hear a faint, continuous wail, hoarse and feeble, with the exhaustion of long effort.

He looked anxiously around, but nowhere could he distinguish any person or thing from which such sounds could emanate. But—what was that just beyond an intervening bush?

He advanced a few steps, so that he could get a better view, and to his horror he saw two small figures who had evidently ventured out upon the treacherous surface, lured by the splendor of the leaves and berries of an especially brilliant shrub that grew on a little hillock just beyond.

The comparative solidity of the surface and the light weight of the children had carried them well out into the swamp when the treacherous footing had given way, and they were slowly but surely being sucked down into the black, horrible slime, with which, in their efforts to free themselves, they were covered, until they were as black as the mud itself.

At sight of Harley they burst into renewed cries and wails, and made frantic efforts to crawl out, which only served to send them farther into the engulfing swamp.

"I believe it's little Ted and Winnie Frost," thought Harley, springing impetuously forward upon a little moss-grown hillock, only to have it sink beneath him, the mud and mire bubbling and gurgling up about his ankles.

Hastily he scrambled back to the shore, and the children, who had looked eagerly to him as their deliverer, with a disheartened wail sank back in a little despairing heap.

"Ted, Winnie," he called huskily, "don't cry. I'll get you out in a minute."

"Oh, if I only had an axe!" he thought. Somehow he must construct a road solid enough to carry him to the children and give him footing to pull them out.

With desperate haste he gathered up stones, sticks, branches,—everything that would serve the purpose. Frantically he sped to the nearest trees; and, paying no heed to the cuts and scratches he received, he broke off all the boughs he could reach and dragged them back.

An old log, rotten and crumbling, caught his eye; and he pried and lifted and rolled till he had it dislodged and, with much difficulty, conveyed to the swamp and added to the material already collected.

A little way off beyond some rising ground he found some sheaves of grain, left in the field, and these he seized, grateful for their bulk, and hurried back with them.

And now he thought his road might serve, and with an encouraging word to the poor little prisoners he ventured out upon his hastily constructed causeway. Some of it trembled beneath him. Some of it sank so far that he feared for his safety, but at last just a step separated him from the children.

He took the step; but the dry, solid-looking crust promptly gave beneath him, and he drew back hastily. He looked desperately around, but there was no more material within reach. Then, as a thought struck him, he jerked off his coat and vest, that in his haste he had kept on, and spread them upon the black surface. Then carefully and fearfully he ventured forward; and, though he sank somewhat, he was able to reach the children,

and with difficulty he drew them, one after the other, from their perilous position and conveyed them to solid ground. Then overcome by his exertion and excitement, he sank, trembling, upon the ground.

How was he to get those children home? They were too weak to walk, and so wet and cold that they should not be left exposed to the cool evening air a minute longer than was necessary.

Realizing that something must be done speedily, he arose shakily to his feet, but paused as the rattle of wheels came to his ears. He hurried in the direction of the sound, and discovered Mr. Frost with his farm-wagon looking about in some perplexity, apparently in search of the vanished sheaves.

As Harley, muddy and bedraggled, appeared, he looked at him in amazement. "Been in the swamp?" he asked with a sort of contemptuous pity.

Harley nodded. "Ted and Winnie have been in, too," he answered dully.

"What? Where are they now?" asked Mr. Frost, excitedly, turning his horses about hastily; and without waiting for Harley he drove rapidly toward the swamp.

When Harley reached the place, he found Mr. Frost gazing distractedly from the children to the hastily-constructed road.

"You did that," he said more as one stating a fact than asking a question.

"I did."

"I won't forget it, boy," he said hoarsely, "I won't forget it. Now get your coat, and I'll take you home."

"My coat? It's out there. I had to stand on it," he explained.

"You'd better bring it anyway," insisted Mr. Frost; and, when Harley returned from a trip over the perilous pathway dragging the filthy garment, Mr. Frost was saying in a sort of maze: "Well, well, he even took his coat! Well, well!"

A few days later, as Mr. Gross and Harley were at work in the field, Mr. Frost came up and somewhat awkwardly accosted them. "About that mortgage," he began, "I—well, I've credited you with half the amount owing, and you can take your time about paying the rest."

"Why, Mr. Frost," began Mr. Gross, protestingly.

"It's for the boy's sake. I can't forget that he saved my children," interrupted Mr. Frost. "He even used his coat," he continued, as if that was the crown of the whole achievement.

"Oh, say, isn't that great?" exclaimed Harley when Mr. Frost had taken his departure. "I guess in the spring we can paint the house, too."

The Nobiest Victory.

BY JOHN E. DOLSEN.

TEN thousand hapless captives in his train,

Dragging their fetters, cannot make one great.

He who wins battles often strives in vain

To conquer in his own heart Greed and Hate.

The noblest victory a man can gain

Is one where selfish passions must be slain.

*For, when the power of imparting joy
Is equal to the will, the human soul
Requires no other heaven.*

SHELLEY.

Fingers.

A BOY is the master of all the earth,
The world is his if he wills to grasp:
No thing too great for his fingers' girth—
Unless they are powerless to reach and grasp!

He may do all things if his hand is strong;
When he says, "There's a chance for some one here,
And I am the one!" he is never wrong,
For the helm must veer as the fingers steer.

A boy is great as his hand is true;
For only the heart makes the fingers shake.
And the hands that win are the hands that grew
From a heart of faith that no storm could break!

H. J. O'BRIEN,
in Boys' World.

Wayside Weed.

BY HAWES LANCASTER.

WAYSIDE WEED nodded gayly to Heart-of-a-Poet, and he gladly stopped to say a pleasant word; for, like nearly all of the Hearts, he enjoyed talking to cheerful people.

"You seem to be having a good time here," he said, "even if you are a bit dusty."

Wayside Weed laughed merrily:

"Oh, I daresay I am dusty enough, but, then, I like to watch the people go by, and you can't have passing crowds without some dust. If you had lived all your life on the side of a road as I have, Heart-of-a-Poet, you would know that things always come mixed, the pleasant with the unpleasant."

"One doesn't have to live on the side of a road to learn that," Heart-of-a-Poet answered. "I have lived in a number of places, and I have always found it the same way. Pleasure and pain come along together; and, if you take more than your share of pleasure, you will have to take more pain than you care to have."

"Well," said Wayside Weed, cheerfully, "of course I don't know very much about it, but I noticed a good while ago that to get something you want you have to take along with it something you don't want. So I take the dust as it comes, and merrily remember that by and by the dew and the rain will come and wash me clean. Then I feel that it is very nice to be here."

"Yes," said Heart-of-a-Poet; but he thought to himself that it did not look very nice there where Wayside Weed was growing. The ground was bare and so sun-baked that it was a wonder she could grow at all: the dust from the road had powdered her leaves to a grayish green.

"How can she breathe?" wondered Heart-of-a-Poet.

For neighbors she had only some grass burs.

"How do you get on with the burs?" he asked. "Are they friendly?"

"Oh, they are very pleasant people if you let them alone. I've been told that they stick those who go prying into their plot, but I do not know that it is true. I never leave my own plot. Whenever I nod across to them, they always nod back to me. I find them very nice neighbors."

"People who stay at home generally do get on well with their neighbors," said Heart-of-a-Poet. "I have heard that said often. See here, Wayside Weed, I like your cheerful way of looking at things. I wish you would tell me your story."

Wayside Weed nodded and laughed:

"Why, I haven't any story worth telling. Wind was playing over there in the meadow one day when I was a little seed. He snatched me out of my mother's lap and ran away with me. He lifted me high and carried me lightly for a while, but, by the time he got here, he was tired and let me fall. I was glad he dropped me when he did. If he had carried me a little farther, I should have fallen into the wheel track and been ground to powder. I could never have come up."

"And, when you did come up and look around you, did you like the place?"

"Well, no, not all at once, I didn't. You see, I had wanted to grow in a garden where I would be petted and made to bloom prettily. I thought if I had only been planted in a garden, I would have been as beautiful as the roses you see blooming over there. I drooped to think I was only a Wayside Weed, and I believe I should have pined myself into a sickly thing if that glad fellow, Light, had not come shining along and advised me to make the best of it. He said:

"Let me tell you, my day's work carries me all over the world, and I have to shine on some very sad and some very sorrowful things. If I had not learned to make the best of it, I would have become gray as gloom long ago."

"Well, I thought, if even a glad fellow like Light has to make the best of things, surely I can do it, too. And you know how it is? When you begin to make the best of things, you are surprised to find how much best there is to be made. I shook the dust from my leaves and lifted my head to the dew. When Light came back in the morning, I gave him all my drops to flash through. My tiny little flowers were not to be thought of with the bright, beautiful roses, but they were pale and pretty, and, when Light kissed them, they looked so happy that a man and a woman who were riding by stopped and smiled."

"Only a Wayside Weed," said the lady, "but how very pretty! I should think it would take courage to keep one's self clean and sweet in a place like this."

"The man leaned down from his saddle to answer her."

"It takes courage to keep one's self clean and sweet in any place, dear," he said. And then they rode on.

"I told Light about it. I told him I would like to keep myself clean and sweet all the time; but how could I when the dust was so thick in the middle of the day? I thought my case a rather hard one, but Light only laughed."

"You can always keep yourself clean and sweet if you make the best of things," he said."

Wayside Weed looked up merrily.

"I have been trying ever since to do as Light said, but I don't look very clean and sweet just now, do I?"

"You look all right," Heart-of-a-Poet told her, happily. "Your soul is clean and sweet even if your leaves are a bit dusty. Oh, I wish there were more cheerful people in the world like you, Wayside Weed!"

The Knot-hole in the Fence.

MY chum and I have lots of fun;
He lives next door to me,
And there's a high board fence between
His yard and mine, you see.

But still we've got a meeting-place,
We think it's just immense;
We see each other often at
The knot-hole in the fence.

I traded there my pocket-knife
For two long pencils new:
The hole was plenty big enough
To push the bargain through.

The other day he spent a cent
For taffy-on-a-stick,
And passed it through the hole to me,
So I could have a lick.

We meet there many times a day,
On this or that pretense;
I don't know what we'd do without
The knot-hole in the fence.

ELEANOR A. SCHROLL,
in the Advance.



Weeds.

WHAT are weeds? Do you know
They are fair and full of grace?
Meadow pests, in gardens, grow
Marguerites and Queen Anne's Lace.

What are faults? Perhaps you'll find
Virtues—if you will but bend
Stubborn will and haughty mind
To some lovely, gracious end.

EMMA MAYHEW WHITING,
in Farm and Fireside.

THE BEACON.

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A Gravel Pit.

BY MARION MURDOCH.

ONE of the very picturesque regions west of Chicago is Kane County, through which runs the Fox River, and from Aurora to Elgin beautiful groves are seen at intervals adorning its banks. Some years ago one of these groves in the vicinity of Geneva was entirely taken out by a railway company to whom the property had been sold. Much to the disapproval of the townspeople who loved the spot, the ground for nearly a quarter of a mile in extent became a gravel-pit to supply material for railway building. Spirit of Ruskin, what vandalism! said the nature-loving citizens. As time went on, one saw the beautiful grove of oak, maple, and elm, bordered with many varieties of shrubs, transformed into a basin of rock and gravel, the grassy hill cut in twain, the rolling plain reduced to a valley, and the whole region turned into what seemed a veritable pit of destruction.

Finally the active work in the pit ceased, and after a number of years I revisited the spot. Nature, always so full of resources, had rallied to repair the ravages. Small, delicate, red-stemmed poplar trees were growing in various places, many varieties of flowers had sprung up, some of them literally covering wide spaces of the depressed ground. Fall grasses grew on the borders of the banks, showing a soft purple against the Western sky, while clusters of under brush, dear to the to-whee and thrush, hung picturesquely over the slopes. In early morning birds came that could be found nowhere else in all the town environs. Here was the element of wildness that they loved; and I have heard grossbeaks and orchard orioles, wood-thrushes and vireos vying with each other in singing the praises of this much-abused gravel-pit.

The mineral kingdom, too, was now well in evidence; for the excavations had laid bare quantities of granite rock and large, white, beautiful quartzite boulders, some of them containing small pockets of calcite crystals. All of these furnished entertainment for the boys of the town who seemed never to tire of walking over the smooth rocks, or sitting on the high banks and surveying them. This survey was usually made, I found, because of their desire to move these huge playthings somewhere, not by the use of a derrick, but by sheer human strength such as boys—and giants—possess. I wondered if any of these boys would come some day to the joy of another sort of interest in these mysterious rocks of such vast history and of such wonderful construction. It was a great satisfaction, however, to know that now not only the boys, but many other

THE Editor has received more than thirty letters for the Club Corner in a month. This is a fine record, but it means that the writers must wait patiently for their letters to appear. Perhaps it will not be possible to publish all the letters in full, but something from each one will be given here. Write what you think will be most interesting and helpful to other readers.

Arthur Bowden of West Medford, Mass., writes:

I go to the Unitarian Sunday school, and am in a class with eight other boys. I enjoy *The Beacon* very much.

Donald Moss, of Lynn, twelve years old, asks to join our Club, as does also Kate Hall, eleven years old, of Clinton, Mass., who enjoys reading *The Beacon*.

Now come some very interesting letters from the boys:

MADISON, WIS.,
158 Summit Ave.

Dear Miss Buck,—We all enjoy reading *The Beacon*. I thought you would like to hear about our Sunday school. We have forty-eight members, who attend very regularly. There are six teachers. The kindergarten, of about ten children, is held during church, so the mothers can attend church. Last year we sent \$10 to India to pay for a year's school for a girl. We also paid \$5 a week for many weeks to help a family whose father had tuberculosis.

Residents of this picturesque town, took pleasure in their resourceful gravel-pit. As the winter season approached when unseen forces were quietly preparing for new glories, the snow came to cover the pit softly, and to join in that sky-born music of which Emerson sings:

"Let me go where'er I will,
I hear a sky-born music still.
It is not only in the rose,
It is not only in the bird,
Not only where the rainbow glows,
Nor in the song of woman heard,
But in the darkest, meanest things
There always, always, something sings."

After all, to him who goes cheerfully among the appointed thorns a thousand pretty blossoms spring up beneath his feet; and among the briars, to lighten the labors of the march, there climbs and twines the honeysuckle.

SIR WALTER BESANT.

The world does not require so much to be informed as to be reminded.

HANNAH MORE.

RECREATION CORNER.

ENIGMA XXIII.

My whole contains forty-six letters, and is a quotation from John Ruskin.

My 12, 2, 35, 13, 8, 38, 42, 29, 9, 19, 27, is a noted poet of England.

My 26, 22, 7, 46, 16, is a hut.

My 1, 37, 39, 24, 28, 15, 6, 18, is one of the world's most decisive battles.

My 23 is a consonant.

My 11, 43, 39, 14, 3, is a name of a Southern song.

My 20, 44, 25, 34, 5, 40, is a household utensil.

My 4, 32, 17, is unused.

My 45, 6, 10, 33, 3, 41, 21, is a musical entertainment.

My 31, 36, is a well-known abbreviation.

FRANCESCA BATE.

THE BEACON CLUB CORNER

We are planning to have a table at the ladies' Christmas sale, to raise money for more charitable work. I am eight years old.

Yours truly,

SAMUEL LENHER.
(First Unitarian Sunday School of
Madison, Wisconsin.)

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, MAN.,
Box 203.

Dear Miss Buck,—I get *The Beacon* every week. I do not go to a Unitarian Sunday school because there is none here; but I read *The Beacon*, and my father reads and explains to us. I often go to my grandfather's farm at Rossendale. It is about twenty-five miles away. We have nice weather just now, but we expect snow and storms and very cold weather soon. I wonder if you ever saw a real Manitoba blizzard. I have not yet; but daddy tells me about them as they used to be, and I hope some time to see one; but I hope no one gets lost or frozen in it. I am,

Your Manitoba friend,
CULBERT MARSHALL.

Dear Miss Buck,—I go to the Divine Science Sunday school, and receive *The Beacon* every Sunday, continuously, and I enjoy reading it very much. I am sending an enigma, which I hope you can print in one of *The Beacons*.

FRED HARBURG,
1735 Pennsylvania Street,
Denver, Col.

ENIGMA XXIV.

I am composed of eight letters.

My 4, 5, 6, 7, is something in a dress.

My 1, 2, 8, is something with which to open a door.

My 3, 2, 4, is something a fisherman uses.

My whole is a State in the Union.

GRETCHEN KRONCKE.

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.

My first is in live, but not in die.

My second in sit, and also lie.

My third in "nothing" I clearly see.

My fourth in candy discovered may be.

My fifth and sixth in opals you find.

My seventh in needle is divined.

My whole was a president of the United States.

What his last name was I leave you to guess.

ELSIE LUSTIG.

A RIDDLE.

I am the friend of seer and sage,

They keep me close at hand,

And their opinions sometimes change

When I give my command.

Without my word no poets sing,

Their lays all would deride,

And yet I'm known to children, too,

And nations far and wide.

Youth's Companion.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 9.

ENIGMA XIX.—Young Contributors' Department.

ENIGMA XX.—Boy Scouts of America.

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.—Easter.

WORD SQUARES.— I.

ELM

LIO

MOP

II.

IRON

ROME

OMAR

NERO

EASY DOUBLE ACROSTIC.—K I T

AgO

NaP

SeE

ArK

SeA

ADDED LETTER PUZZLE.—Able, table; tar, tart; cur, curt; meal, metal; war, wart; sill, still; star, start; ear, tear.